

DRIVER: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES IN EUROPE

Jones, S., Robinson, M. and Hubbard, B.,
SHERPA - A29, Greenfield Medical Library, Medical School, Queen's Medical Centre
Information Services, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD
mary.robinson@nottingham.ac.uk

Institutional repositories respond to two growing needs in the Higher Education community: 1) to promote and enhance the process of research itself and 2) to develop and enhance the information management strategies and capabilities of universities and research institutions.

Open access digital repositories provide a means whereby the traditional publishing model can co-exist with the needs of authors and their readers, as well as with the demands of research funders for research impact and hence, value for money. Subject to copyright, authors can deposit copies of their finished articles in open access repositories, in addition to publishing them in research journals. These articles can then be freely accessed by anyone in the world via an internet connection. Freely available ePrints can be used in teaching, shared with colleagues and used for innovative analysis, like text or data-mining. By removing access barriers, the process of research is made quicker and easier.

Studies by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) have shown that institutional repositories are acquiring significant support from researchers and other key stakeholders, mainly because institutional repositories offer long term stability and the facility for curation but also because they offer the tools for managing information systems.

A recent study of scientific publication markets in Europe funded by the European Commission ¹ strongly recommends the development of a European policy mandating open access to EC-funded research. DRIVER (Digital Repository Infrastructure Vision for European Research) is a high profile, major European project with 10 international partners, funded by the European Commission and it reflects the international enthusiasm surrounding the Open Access movement.

DRIVER sets out to build a testbed for a future knowledge infrastructure of the European Research Area. The testbed is based on existing nationally organized digital repository infrastructures. Other work includes the support of new European repositories.

The main objectives of the project involve the organisation of a virtual, European scale network of existing institutional repositories; the assessment and implementation of a number of fundamental user services; and the preparation for the future expansion and upgrade of the Digital Repositories infrastructure across Europe. The project is now actively advocating repository development - creating an informed and active environment for repository infrastructure development in EU countries - with focused activities, information and contextualized support.

This poster will explain the vision behind DRIVER and will describe how the various aspects of the project tie in together to form the knowledge infrastructure of the European Research Area and the place of institutional repositories within this. DRIVER is an ambitious and important project that will yield valuable results for individual researchers, the Higher Education community, funding agencies and the European Research community as a whole.

1. "Study on the economic and technical evolution of the scientific publication markets in Europe"
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